

Handout 3.1: USDA's *Vary Your Vegetables for Healthier School Meals*



Fact Sheet

Vary Your Vegetables for Healthier School Meals

KEY ISSUES:

- People who eat more vegetables as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.
- Most children and adults need to eat more dark green and orange vegetables, and dry beans and peas (legumes).
- Vegetables provide important nutrients, including vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, folate, and dietary fiber.
- The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend we eat 2 ½ cups of vegetables every day (based on a 2,000-calorie meal plan).
- Offer a wide variety of colorful, appealing vegetables every day.
- Start a farm-to-school program to obtain fresh produce locally. To get started, go to: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance

Want to add more color, crunch, and flavor to your menus? Offering a wide variety of vegetables provides a quick and easy way to make school meals pop with dazzling eye appeal and help students get the nutritional benefits they need. By eating more vegetables, students develop lifelong habits that promote good health!

Easy ways to
follow the 2005
*Dietary Guidelines for
Americans*

Recipe for Success

Go for variety!

- Offer different veggies every day, and include servings in each of these groups over a week:
 - Dark green: broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, and other dark leafy greens
 - Orange: acorn and butternut squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin
 - Dry beans and peas: black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, split peas, pinto beans, and white beans
 - Starchy: corn, green peas, green lima beans, and potatoes
 - Others: cauliflower, celery, cabbage, tomatoes, green beans, and iceberg lettuce

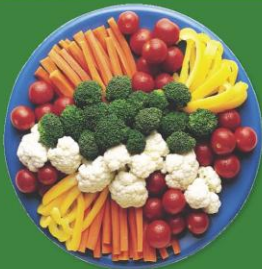
Boost the nutritional value!

- Offer plenty of raw veggies to get more dietary fiber.
- Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of butter or hard margarine to season vegetable dishes to lower saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and extra calories in vegetable dishes.
- Buy canned vegetables labeled “no-salt added” or choose lower sodium products.

Add more veggies to meals and snacks!

- Prepare veggies in different ways: fresh, cooked, as a side dish, or entree. For example, make a vegetable stir-fry or chicken Caesar salad.





USDA Commodity Food Program

You can stretch your food budget and insure high quality by ordering a wide variety of vegetables through USDA's Commodity Food Program and the Department of Defense. Check out the list of available foods at: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/ and www.dscp.dla.mil/subs/produce/index.asp.

- **Add shredded carrots or zucchini** into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads, and muffins. Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- **Serve seasonal veggies** like zucchini, squash, yams, and sweet potatoes.
- **Include cooked dry beans or peas** in flavorful mixed dishes. Add extra beans to casseroles or minestrone soup. Or, use white beans in your favorite chili recipe.
- **Offer garbanzo beans or kidney beans** on a salad bar.



Make vegetables more appealing!

- **Entice your students** with colorful and tasty fresh vegetables in small, easy-to-eat shapes: baby carrots or carrot sticks, green and red pepper slices, grape tomatoes, broccoli or cauliflower florets, and sliced zucchini and yellow squash.
- **Have taste tests and offer samples** to encourage students to try different vegetables.
- **Add color to lettuce mix** with carrot slices or strips, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves.
- **Serve low-fat dressing or dip** with raw veggies.

Did You Know?

It's important to wash all vegetables before cutting, preparing, or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub them briskly with your hands or a brush to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry after washing.

Remember to keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while receiving, storing, or preparing them.

Messages for Students

- Eat a rainbow of colorful vegetables at lunch!
- Craving a crunchy snack? Grab raw veggies and low-fat dip for a delicious treat!
- Try a new veggie once a week—at home or at school.



For more information:

www.MyPyramid.gov

www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php>

www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/index.html



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Food and Nutrition Service

Handout 3.2: *Vegetable Subgroups and HUSSC*

The basic HUSSC vegetable criteria is to offer a different vegetable each day with all servings at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving size. Vegetables from any group may be offered to meet these criteria. Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts in the vegetable group in MyPyramid. Vegetables are organized into the subgroups below, based on their nutrient content.

The following are the **only** foods that meet the HUSSC criteria for dark green or orange vegetables and dry beans or peas (including those peas and beans listed on pages 1-5 through 1-12 and on page 1-40 in the USDA Food Buying Guide):

Dark green and orange vegetables: Offer dark green or orange vegetables on 3 or more days per week. Of the 3, at least 2 must be different. At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup servings are required.

Acorn squash	Collard greens	Kale	Spinach
Beet greens	Dark green leafy lettuce	Mesclun	Sweet potatoes
Bok choy	Endive	Mustard greens	Swiss chard
Broccoli	Escarole	Pumpkin	Turnip greens
Butternut squash	Hubbard squash	Romaine lettuce	Watercress
Carrots			

Dry beans and peas*: Offer at least 1 serving per week. At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup servings required.

Black beans	Kidney beans	Pink beans	Split peas
Black-eyed peas	Lentils	Pinto beans	
Garbanzo beans	Lima beans, mature	Red beans	
(chickpeas)	Navy (Pea) beans	Soybeans, mature	
Great Northern beans			

The following are commonly eaten vegetables that meet HUSSC criteria. These and any other vegetable may count toward HUSSC criteria for a different vegetable each day of the week:

Starchy vegetables: At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup servings are required.

Corn	Edamame, green	Lima beans, green
Green peas	soybeans	Potatoes

Other vegetables: At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup servings are required.

Artichokes	Celery	Kohlrabi	Squash, white scallop
Asparagus	Cucumbers	Mushrooms	Squash, yellow crookneck
Bean sprouts	Eggplant	Okra	Squash, zucchini
Beets	Green beans	Olives, green or black	Tomatoes
Brussels sprouts	Green or red peppers	Onions	Tomato juice
Cabbage (red or green)	Iceberg (head) lettuce	Parsnips	Turnips, root
Cauliflower	Jicama	Radishes	Vegetable juice
		Rutabaga	Wax beans

* Mature dry beans and peas are creditable in food-based menu planning as either a vegetable or meat/meat alternate component, but not as both components in the same meal. Dry refers to the bean being harvested dry, not to the purchase form of the bean. Many canned beans and peas are actually dry beans and peas that have been cooked and canned. Any fresh or frozen bean or pea does not qualify.

Handout 3.3: Matching the Vegetable Subgroups Activity Sheet

Read the vegetable name in the first column and choose the matching vegetable subgroup from the second column.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. | Romaine lettuce | a. Dark green and |
| _____ 2. | Carrot slices | orange vegetables |
| _____ 3. | Mesclun (assorted baby salad greens) | b. Dry beans and peas |
| _____ 4. | White beans | c. Starchy vegetables |
| _____ 5. | Green beans | d. Other vegetables |
| _____ 6. | Yellow crookneck squash | |
| _____ 7. | Iceberg (head) lettuce | |
| _____ 8. | Chopped broccoli | |
| _____ 9. | Green peas | |
| _____ 10. | Sweet potatoes | |
| _____ 11. | Baby green lima beans | |
| _____ 12. | Beans in tomato sauce with pork (pork & beans) | |
| _____ 13. | Acorn squash | |
| _____ 14. | Turnip greens | |
| _____ 15. | Corn cobbettes | |
| _____ 16. | Brussels sprouts | |

Handout 3.4: Serve More Dry Beans and Peas for Healthier School Meals



Fact Sheet

Serve More Dry Beans and Peas *for Healthier School Meals*

KEY ISSUES:

- Dietary fiber from dry beans and peas (legumes) as part of a healthy diet helps to lower the risk of heart disease.
- Dry beans and peas:
 - are excellent sources of plant protein.
 - provide other nutrients such as iron, potassium, folate, and zinc.
 - are naturally low in fat and sodium.
 - have no saturated fat or cholesterol.
- The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating three cups of beans a week, based on a 2,000-calorie meal plan.
- Serve beans or other legumes at least once per week to help students get these important nutrients!

We know beans are good for us, but many people don't realize how delicious they taste! Beans are an inexpensive food that can boost the nutritional content of school meals. Beans are versatile, too. Whether served as a vegetarian option, or served with meats, poultry, fish and cheese, beans complement the meal. Find creative ways to add more beans to school menus! For example, try savory pinto beans and salsa in a chef salad, or add red beans to rice pilaf!

Dry beans and peas are mature forms of legumes, or plants which have pods with rows of seeds inside. Some popular varieties include pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, lentils, split peas, and garbanzo beans (chickpeas). Only a few types, such as green beans, string beans, baby green lima beans, and fresh soybeans (edamame) are not considered dry beans.

Easy ways to
follow the 2005
Dietary Guidelines for
Americans

Recipe for Success

- **Choose the easiest form!** Use canned, pre-cooked beans to simplify recipes (no soaking needed) and reduce cooking times.
- **Power up recipes with more beans!** Add dry-packaged or canned beans and peas when preparing casseroles, stews, and side dishes. Make chili more interesting by combining kidney and pinto beans.
- **Serve satisfying soups.** Attract students and teachers with low-sodium split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups. Use pureed beans to thicken soups and sauces.
- **Spice up your menus with Southwest flair!** Offer black bean enchiladas, low-fat refried beans, or tacos with whole pinto beans.





USDA Commodity Food Program

Order dry beans and peas uncooked in sealed bags or pre-cooked in cans through the USDA Commodity Food Program. USDA will offer low-sodium (140 mg/serving) canned dry beans and peas in School Year 2009. Check the list of available foods at: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/.

- **Have a bean taste-test!** Let students sample dishes that use dry beans and peas as a main ingredient. Some ideas include: Veggie Burgers, Taco Pizza with refried beans, Cowboy Beans, Hummus, or Lentil Pilaf.

- **Spruce up the salad bar!** Offer canned garbanzo beans, red kidney beans, black beans, or a mixture of all three!

- **Use colorful garnishes** like diced fresh green pepper or red pepper rings to add eye appeal and showcase your favorite bean dishes.

- **Bring back a classic!**
Pair baked beans as a side dish with oven-baked chicken to bring back memories of a summer cookout!



- Try a great-tasting hummus dip (made from pureed garbanzo beans) with vegetables or whole-wheat pita bread for a delicious snack.



Did You Know?

- MyPyramid includes dry beans and peas in both the Vegetable Group and the Meat and Beans Group. Beans and other legumes count as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal.
- Rinsing and draining pre-cooked canned beans reduces the sodium content. Or, soak and cook bagged dry beans without adding any salt.
- Dry beans and peas provide an excellent source of plant protein and fiber, magnesium, folate, iron, and zinc. Americans often do not get enough of these nutrients.

Messages for Students

- Be a Bean Counter. Try ½ cup of beans in your favorite soups and side dishes. Beans are naturally low in fat and provide some of the iron and potassium your body needs.
- Make your meal or snack pop with flavor!
 - Wrap black beans in a tortilla with low-fat cheese and salsa for a satisfying meal!

For more information:

www.MyPyramid.gov

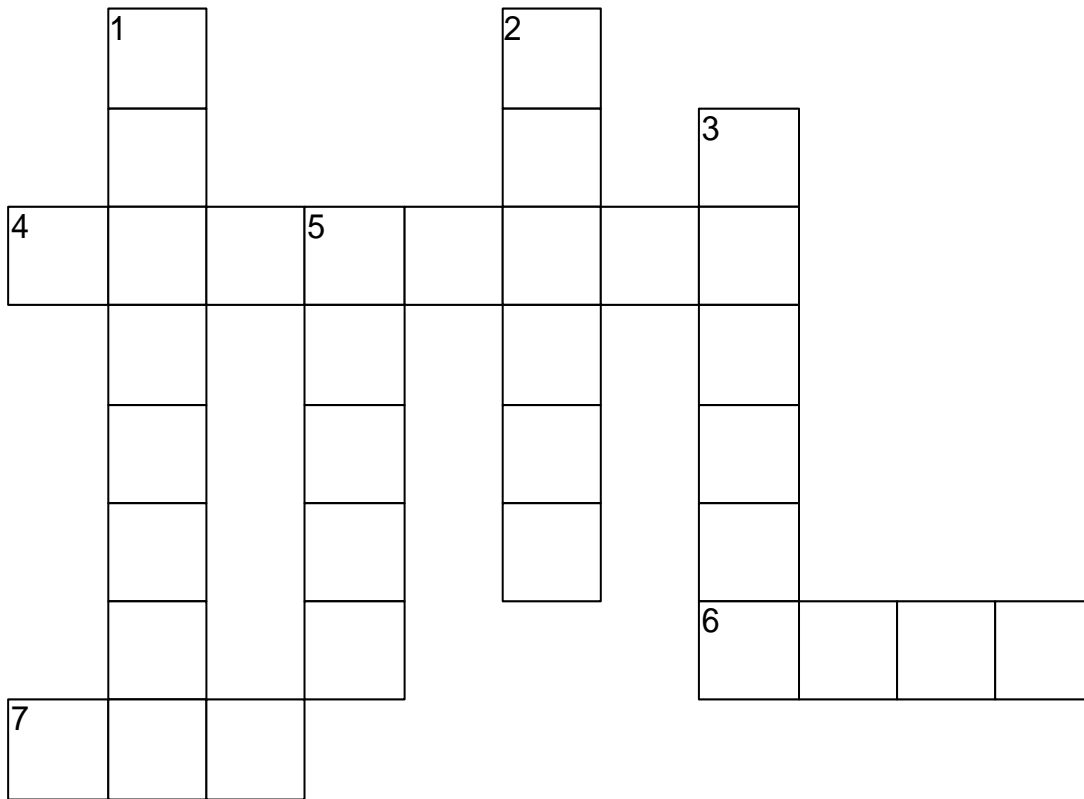


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Handout 3.5: Identifying Varieties of Dry Beans and Peas Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- 4 Hummus ingredient
6 Common bean in soups
7 Popular bean across USA

DOWN

- 1 Southern favorite
- 2 Bean in Middle Eastern dishes
- 3 New England baked bean dish
- 5 Cuban favorite

Handout 3.6: Tips for Using Dry Beans and Peas in Your Menus

- Main Dishes
- Salad bars, side salads
- Vegetable side dishes
- Soups

Handout 3.7: Jazz Up Your Menu with Fruits for Healthier School Meals



Fact Sheet

Jazz Up Your Menu With Fruits for Healthier School Meals

KEY ISSUES:

- People who eat a variety of fruits as part of a healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.
- The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that we eat two cups of fruit every day (based on a 2,000 calorie meal plan).
- Remember, fruits:
 - provide nutrients that we need for good health, such as potassium, fiber, vitamin C, and folate.
 - are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories.
 - have no cholesterol.
- Offer a variety of fruits every week.
- Contact local farmers to start a farm-to-school program to obtain high quality fresh produce. To get started, go to: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance.

We eat with our eyes—then our mouths. If it looks good, we'll taste it. If it tastes good, we'll eat it. Because fruits are colorful and delicious, they have built-in kid appeal. And because they are available in so many forms—fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juice—they give you a quick and easy way to boost the nutrition of your school meals and snacks.

Recipe for Success

Boost the nutritional value

- Go easy on juice. Offer most fruit whole or cut up to get more dietary fiber.
- Vary fruit choices. Offer fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, and honeydew melon.
- Select fruit canned in 100 percent fruit juice or water, rather than syrup.
- Cut the fat with fruit! Try applesauce as a fat-free substitute for some of the oil when baking cookies and cakes.

Add fruit to meals and snacks

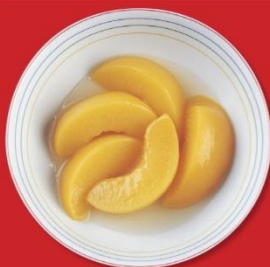
- Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor; seasonal fruits like tangerines, bananas, or grapes are great on a salad bar.
- Add crushed pineapple, mandarin oranges, fresh apples, or grapes to your favorite salad mix or coleslaw.
- Offer baked apples, fruit cobbler, or a fruit salad for a dessert treat!

Make fruit look good and easy to eat

- Choose a variety of fruits with contrasting colors and shapes to catch kids' attention.
- Cut up fruits, especially apples and oranges, to make them kid-friendly and easy to eat.

Easy ways to follow the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans





USDA Commodity Food Program

You can stretch your food budget and insure high quality by ordering a wide variety of fruits through USDA's Commodity Food Program and the Department of Defense. Check out the list of available fruits at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/ and www.dscp.dla.mil/subs/produce/index.asp.

- **Serve low-fat** yogurt as a dip for fruits.
- **Try a fruit smoothie** at breakfast! Blend fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit like bananas, peaches, or berries.
- **For fresh fruit salads**, mix apples, bananas, or pears with acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple, or lemon juice to keep them from turning brown.
- **Serve individual containers** of fruits like peaches or applesauce as part of a grab-and-go lunch or snack.

Messages for Students

- Cut-up fruit makes a great snack. Or, try whole fresh berries or grapes.
- Dried fruits also make a tasty portable snack. Try dried apricots, apples, pineapple, bananas, cherries, figs, dates, cranberries, blueberries, prunes (dried plums), and raisins (dried grapes).
- When you're craving something sweet, think fruit. It tastes delicious—with no added sugar.



Did You Know?

- It's best to wash all fruits (including melons and oranges) before cutting, preparing, or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly with your hands or a brush to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry after washing.
- Remember to keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while receiving, storing, or preparing.

For more information:

www.MyPyramid.gov
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php>
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Food and Nutrition Service

Handout 3.8: NFSMI's Cooks for Kids *Spring Salads*

Spring Salads

Children should have access to healthy food and be able to make healthy food choices wherever they are – at home, in school, and in the community. Improving the health of the nation's children and reversing the childhood obesity epidemic is a shared responsibility and will take the commitment of parents, the foodservice industry, the media, and schools working together. The vision of USDA's School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) is to improve the health of school children through better nutrition. Implementing the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in school meals will have important health benefits for children.



SCHOOL CONNECTION

Menu-Planning Practices for Healthy School Meals

- Offer fresh vegetable salads or fresh vegetables daily.
- Offer a dark green or deep orange vegetable three-to-four times a week.
- Offer low-fat salad dressings.
- Increase the variety of fruits and vegetables offered because fruits and vegetables differ in nutrient content.

Culinary Techniques for Preparing Lettuces and Greens

Handle lettuce and greens carefully in selection, storage, and preparation to avoid damage.

Selection

- Select greens with fresh, green or red, outer leaves. Avoid yellow or brown leaves.
- Select greens with crisp or soft leaves. Avoid wilted leaves.

Storage

- Store greens away from fruits (such as melons, apples, pears) that give off ethylene gas that can cause brown spots on lettuce leaves and spoilage.
- Store in the coolest part of the refrigerator.

Preparation

- Remove any browned, slimy, or wilted leaves.
- Leaves should be cut or torn into bite-size pieces. Hearty lettuces, such as crisphead or romaine can be cut with a sharp knife. Delicate lettuces, such as butterhead or leaf lettuce, are best if torn gently.

Did you know?

Most greens are good sources of vitamin C, calcium, folacin, iron, and fiber. Generally, the darker the green, the more nutrients are in the leaf. It is a bonus that lettuce is low in calories and sodium.

Washing

Wash lettuce in produce sink with plenty of cold water. Some types of lettuce require different preparation than others. Some need to be cut or broken into smaller pieces before serving. Loose greens should have the damaged, wilted or yellowed leaves removed and the remaining greens should be soaked in cold water and drained. This process should be repeated until there are no longer any sediments at the bottom of the bowl.

Drying

Lettuce can then be placed in a lettuce spinner to dry. If you do not have a spinner, they can be drained in a colander and then placed in a bag with a couple of paper towels and gently shaken. The paper towels will collect most of the excess moisture. Dry lettuce greens will allow the salad dressing to adhere properly and the lettuce will keep better for a longer time.

Salad Spinner

A piece of equipment used to remove excess moisture from freshly washed lettuce, greens, herbs, and other similar leafy greens. The washed product is placed in a perforated basket that fits into an outer container. The outer container has a fitted lid that has a pull cord, a hand crank, or hand pump handle, which is activated to spin the inner basket, forcing excess moisture off the food and out the perforations in the basket. The moisture is collected in the outer container and discarded after the inner basket is removed.

Culinary Resources

- National Food Service Management Institute. (1996). *Culinary techniques for healthy school meals*. University, MS: Author.
- National Food Service Management Institute. (2005). *Healthy cuisine for kids*. University, MS: Author.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2007, January). *The road to SMI success - A guide for school food service directors*. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/roadtosuccess.html>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2007). *HealthierUS school challenge: Recognizing nutrition excellence in schools*. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2004). *Fruits & vegetables galore: Helping kids eat more*. Available at http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html

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For more information, visit us on the Web at www.nfsmi.org

Handout 3.9: NFSMI Cooks for Kids *Fruits Go Back to School*

Fruits go back to School

Children should have access to healthy food and be able to make healthy food choices wherever they are – at home, in school, and out in the community. Improving the health of the nation's children and reversing the childhood obesity epidemic is a shared responsibility and will take the commitment of parents, the foodservice industry, the media, and schools working together. The vision of USDA's School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children (SMI) is to improve the health of school children through better nutrition. Implementing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in school meals will have important health benefits for children.



Menu-Planning Practices for Healthy School Meals

- Increase the amounts and variety of fruits offered because fruits offer an abundance of important nutrients such as fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Fruits are low in calories, fats, and sodium. Children who eat generous amounts of fruits as part of a healthy diet are likely to have reduced risk of chronic diseases, including stroke, coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer.
- Frequently offer fresh fruits using a variety of presentations, such as apple wedges, fresh fruit cups, and banana halves.
- Plan a vitamin C rich fruit or vegetable daily.
- Offer fruit with more potassium often, such as bananas, honeydew melon, oranges, and orange juice.

Culinary Techniques for Fresh Fruits

- Wash fresh fruits close to the time they will be prepared for service. Use clean, cool water and drain the fruit well.
- Berries should be kept in the original container and washed just before serving to prevent softening and to discourage mold growth.
- To prevent browning with fruits such as apples, pears, peaches, bananas, and avocados cut them with a stainless steel blade and then dip in an acidic fruit juice or a commercial product that contains ascorbic acid.
- Prepare in serving size pieces and keep chilled until service. Fruit should be cut in age-appropriate size pieces.
- Offer cut-up fruit as a topping for yogurt.

Culinary Technique for Cooking or Baking Fruit

- Use the right form of the fruit for the recipe. The recipe will suggest the form of the fruit to use: fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Use the form suggested since the textures are different and affect the quality of the baked products.
- Most baked fruit recipes can be prepared ahead of service time and held in the warmer. Fruit dishes that have a crust, such as pie or cobbler should be placed in a warmer uncovered or held at room temperature until time for service.
- Savory fruit sauces should have a balance of sweet and savory and can be used for dipping chicken strips or cheese sticks.

Fruits Are Versatile

Serve delicious fruits at:

Breakfast
Lunch
Snacks

Feature fruits in:

Cold soups
Salads
Side Dishes
Main Courses
Sandwiches
Pizzas
Sauces
Desserts

Resources

National Food Service Management Institute, *Cooking for the New Generation*, 2007.
National Food Service Management Institute, *Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals*, 1996.
National Food Service Management Institute, *Healthy Cuisine for Kids*, 2005.
U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More*, 2004.

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